

Message Text

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ACTION EB-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AEC-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

OES-04 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-01 PA-02 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5128

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

UNCLAS LONDON 13988

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL TIMES REPORTS NORWAY LIKELY TO
WITHDRAW FROM IEP

REF: LONDON 13942; STATE 234104

1. OCTOBER 25 FINANCIAL TIMES CARRIES ARTICLE DATED
OSLO WHICH PROVIDES DETAILED ACCOUNT OF NORWEGIAN
DELIBERATIONS OVER IEP.

2. TEXT OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT THAT NORWAY
WILL WITHDRAW FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAMME
DRAWN UP BY THE 12 NATION ENERGY CO-ORDINATION GROUP TO
PROVIDE FOR SHARING OF RESOURCES IN A FUTURE OIL CRISIS.
PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION TO NORWAY'S PARTICIPATION HAS
BEEN STRENGTHENED BY A DIVISION OF OPINION WITHIN THE
GOVERNING LABOUR PARTY AND WITHIN THE CABINET ITSELF.

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT AGREED ITS POSITION AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MEET THE OCTOBER 29 DEADLINE BY WHICH THE 12 PARTICIPATING NATIONS WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE INFORMED BRUSSELS OF THEIR APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT PLAN DRAWN UP ON SEPTEMBER 21. THE MINORITY LABOUR CABINET HAS PLEDGED THAT THERE WILL BE NO DECISION ON NORWEGIAN PARTICIPATION WITHOUT THE BACKING OF PARLIAMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDATION WILL BE THRASHED OUT NEXT WEEK AFTER PRIME MINISTER TRYGVE BRATTELI'S RETURN FROM A VISIT TO EASTERN EUROPE, PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT ON NOVEMBER 1 BY FOREIGN MINISTER KNUT FRYDENLUND AND DEBATED WITHIN PARLIAMENT IN TIME FOR NORWAY TO INFORM THE OECD COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF ITS POSITION BY THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER.

THE OUTCOME MOST CONSISTENTLY PREDICTED HERE IS THAT, WHILE DECLINING TO JOIN THE OIL-SHARING PROGRAMME, NORWAY WILL MAKE A "DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY" WITH THE CO-ORDINATION GROUP CONTAINING AN IMPLICIT PLEDGE TO AID ITS WESTERN ALLIES WITH ITS GROWING OIL RESOURCES IN A FUTURE EMERGENCY.

NORWEGIAN OBJECTIONS TO THE PLAN ARE THAT IT IS DESIGNED FOR OIL CONSUMERS WHILE NORWAY WILL SOON BE A MAJOR EXPORTER OF OIL, THAT THE AUTOMATIC "TRIGGERING" OF THE PLAN IN AN EMERGENCY WOULD DEPRIVE NORWAY OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS OWN OIL RESOURCES AND THAT THE PLAN DESIGNED UNDER U.S. LEADERSHIP SMACKS TOO MUCH OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES.

THE GOVERNMENT FEARS THAT BY FORCING THE ISSUE IT COULD SPLIT THE NATION AGAIN AS IN THE 1972 REFERENDUM ON COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP AND SPARK OFF AN EMBARRASSING DEBATE ON NORWAY'S WESTERN ALLIANCE. IT IS AT THE SAME TIME ANXIOUS NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION ABROAD THAT NORWAY IS ABANDONING THE POST-WAR FOREIGN POLICY THAT TOOK NORWAY INTO NATO.

MR. TOR OFTEDAL, THE INFLUENTIAL LABOUR CHAIRMAN OF THE PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, WHO IS AGAINST UNCLASSIFIED

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NORWEGIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PLAN AS CURRENTLY WORDED, INSISTED IN AN INTERVIEW YESTERDAY THAT REJECTION OF THE PLAN AND THE DECISION TO EXTEND NORWEGIAN FISHING LIMITS DID NOT MEAN NORWAY WAS CHANGING COURSE IN FOREIGN POLICY. UNQUOTE.

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